

607-609 C St. (Commercial Building)
(McDonald's)
Washington
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-515

HABS
DC,
WASH,
315-

PHOTOGRAPH

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

607 C Street is a three story building located on the eastern portion of lot 17. The approximate dimensions of the lot are 25' wide and 58' long. The building is approximately 50' high and 58' long.

The building has undergone large alterations. On the ground floor there is a storefront dating from the 1970's. The upper two floors of the brick facade are more intact. There are three window bays per floor. Openings consist of a very flat segmental arch over very tall windows. The wood window sash are double hung with six over six lights. The center sash of the second floor has been replaced by metal louvers. On the roof parapet there is a simple metal cornice supported by four metal brackets.

The degree of alterations carried out in the interiors reflect those outside. The ground floor has been totally remodeled and integrated with the space of the adjacent structure. The small basement at the rear has also been remodeled. The upper floors are entirely open. On the west wall, there is a painted commercial sign indicating that this building is of later construction than its neighbor. There are no significant finishes. The floors are all wood; the walls are brick. The wood structure is protected by gypsum board ceilings.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

This building has very little architectural significance. Apparently designed for warehousing purposes, it is strictly utilitarian in design.

The demolition of the Nineteenth Century urban context around it has left this building and its neighbor to the west formally isolated from a coherent environment.

The earliest permit on record for this address is from 1894 (Permit No. 1681, 18-5-1894). It allows for alterations to the show windows. The 1886 City Directory lists W. H. Butler, Paints, at 607-609 C Street. The approximate date of construction can be inferred to be 1870 to 1885.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

As with most of Square 459, this building is sited on a lot shaped like a bent rectangle. The frontage along C Street is 25' while the average depth dimension is 60'. The building is three stories high and follows the configuration of the lot. The structure consists of brick party walls supporting the wood joists of the floors and the flat roof.

The adjacent structure to the west is the Central Union Mission Building, a seven-story Neo-Classical structure. To the west there is a three-story traditional commercial building. There is communication with the latter building at every floor, reflecting the most recent use of both buildings as a fast-food restaurant. The facade has been thoroughly altered at the storefront level, where new masonry piers provide the framework for modern aluminum show windows. A mansard canopy unifies the ground level of both buildings into a single design. The brick upper floors have three square-headed window bays with stone lintels and sills. On the second level, metal louvers have replaced the window sash. On the third, there are double hung wooden sash with two over two lights. The roof parapet is topped by a simple brick cornice featuring one course of dentils and one of sawtooth work.

The interior of the ground level has been integrated with the adjacent building. The front area is entirely open. The kitchen and a recent quarter-turn stair occur at the rear. A small basement, accessible through an area way on the rear yard of the neighboring structure occupies only the rear portion of the building. The front area is only unexcavated crawl space. The second and third floor are basically open in plan, with only some temporary partitions defining work areas on the north side of the second floor. The two levels are communicated by an enclosed straight run wooden stair that ascends along the west wall. The third level presents an interesting red floral stencil motif on a pink field of paint applied on the plaster of the party walls. The three front windows have interior wooden shutters with the center panes featuring vertical louvers. On the roof there is a skylight illuminating the southern portion of the third floor.

An opening on the east party wall occurs on both the second and the third floor.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

From an architectural point of view this building has little value other than being a mediocre example of commercial construction at the turn of the century. Stylistically, it is so utilitarian that it can receive no specific classification other than vernacular topped by a cornice with Queen Anne aspirations.

Its relative isolation and the alterations suffered by this background building have neutralized any positive contribution it may have once made to the traditional cityscape.

A precise date of construction has been impossible to establish. All building permits on record are for alterations with the earliest one dating from 1879. City Directories list Suther Martin, Paints, at this address between 1871-1877. From 1875 to 1883, Martin & Butler Paints is at this location. The cornice is typical of work done during the Queen Anne Style years. Thus it appears that the building dates from the years between the Civil War and 1875.